

LXXV.—On the Generic Name *Stolasterias*, Sladen.

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IN that invaluable work by Sladen on the Asteroidea of the 'Challenger' Expedition (Zoology, xxx.) we find the first systematic attempt to subdivide the large and unwieldy genus *Asterias* into smaller and more natural groups. Sladen considered these groups to be subgenera; but since then all have been accorded generic rank by Perrier and others. Some of Sladen's groups (as, for example, *Stolasterias*) have been again divided into narrower genera. In this division unnecessary confusion has been caused by the renaming of previously named genera and the transference of *Stolasterias* to a slightly different group—in other words, by giving it a new type species.

To begin at the beginning, the type of *Stolasterias*, Sladen, is *Asterias tenuispina*, Lamarek. In an article entitled "Notes on the Radiata in the Museum of Yale College, with Descriptions of new Genera and Species"\*, p. 248, Verrill describes a new genus and species, *Coscinasterias muricata*, from New Zealand, giving a separate diagnosis for the genus. This species Sladen considered as strictly congeneric with *A. tenuispina*, for he placed it under the synonymy of *Asterias (Stolasterias) calamaria*, Gray, the third species (l. c. p. 583) of his "*Asterias tenuispina* group." It is curious that he did not recognize the claims of the generic name, which should have been given to the subgenus instead of a new designation, *Stolasterias*. In other words, the genus *Stolasterias*, including *tenuispina*, *calamaria*, *gemmijera*, *volsellata*, *stichantha*, *glacialis*, and other species, must be called by the much older name *Coscinasterias*, Verrill.

In 1894 Perrier † divided Sladen's group into three genera—*Coscinasterias*, Verrill (type *calamaria*), *Polyasterias*, Perrier (type, by inference, *tenuispina*), *Stolasterias*, Sladen, emended (type *glacialis*!). In 1896 ‡ he added another genus, *Distolasterias* (type *stichantha*, Sladen), for the five- and six-rayed species with two spines to each adambulacral plate. Since *tenuispina* had already been made the type of *Stolasterias*, the name *Polyasterias* was superfluous and falls

\* Trans. Conn. Academy, i. part 2, Feb. 1867.

† Expéd. 'Travailleur' et 'Talisman,' Echinodermes, p. 108.

‡ "Contrib. à l'Étude des Stellérides de l'Atlantique Nord," Rés. Campag. Scientif. du Prince de Monaco, fasc. xi. p. 34.

as a synonym of *Stolasterias*. The calm transferring of the name *Stolasterias* to another species and the use of it in other than the original sense cannot be too strongly condemned. This change was entirely unnecessary, since *Asterius glacialis* has already served as the type (sub nomine *foliacea*) of *Marthasterias*, Jullien\*.

Whether these smaller groups of Perrier are valid genera or not is probably a matter of opinion. The distinction between *Marthasterias* and *Distolasterias* is simply the possession by the former of one, by the latter of two, adambulacral spines. Species of the latter group have plates with only one spine scattered among the others. It is even seriously to be questioned whether some of these groups are worthy of subgeneric rank, but they have been so placed in the following list in order to straighten out the claims of the various names. The subgenus *Stolasterias* †, Sladen, will therefore become the genus *Coscinasterias*, Verrill, and the names *Polyasterias*, Perrier, and *Stolasterias*, Perrier (but not of Sladen), will drop out of nomenclature. The list is as follows:—

Genus COSCINASTERIAS, Verrill, 1869.

Subgenus COSCINASTERIAS, Verrill, 1869; type, *Asterius calamaria*, Gray, sub nomine *C. muricata*.

Subgenus STOLASTERIAS, Sladen, 1889, restricted; type, *Asterius tenuispina*, Lamarck. (Syn. *Polyasterias*, Perrier.)

Subgenus MARTHASTERIAS, Jullien, 1878; type, *Asterius glacialis*, O. F. Müller, sub nomine *M. foliacea*. (Syn. *Stolasterias*, Perrier, nec Sladen.)

Subgenus DISTOLASTERIAS, Perrier, 1896; type, *Asterius (Stolasterias) stichantha*, Sladen.

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\* Bull. Soc. Zool. France, 1878, p. 141. *Marthasterias foliacea* is equivalent to *Asterius glacialis*, O. F. Müller, according to Sladen and Ludwig.

† Employed as a genus in Sladen's sense by Ludwig, Mem. Mus. Comp. Zoology, xxxii. 1905 (July 17), p. 221.